



Ideas for Parents of Children in Kindergarten

Starting School

Starting school is a big step in your child's life. You can help your child adjust to Kindergarten in the following ways:

1. Encourage your child to dress independently, including putting on his or her shoes, however, tying shoe laces can be difficult for a five year old.
2. Take your child to the school playground to play on the climbing equipment.
3. Encourage your child to follow three step directions such as "Find your crayons, make a picture and bring it to me".
4. When your child comes home from school, ask him or her specific questions such as "Who did you play with today?", "What centre did you play in and what did you do there?" and "Tell me about the story that your teacher read today?"
5. Establish a consistent bedtime routine for your child. Tuck your child into bed with a story such as *Guess How Much I love you* by Sam McBratney, *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch, *Time for Bed* by Mem Fox or *Good Night Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of starting school. Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
- ✓ *Franklin Goes to School* by Paulette Bourgeois (available in French)
- ✓ *Wemberly Worries* by Kevin Henkes
- ✓ *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come* by Nancy Carlson
- ✓ *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate

Autumn

Kindergarten children learn about time in general by talking about the days of the week, months of the year and the seasons. You can help your child to become more aware of time in general and the season of autumn in the following ways:

1. Use a calendar at home to talk about the day, date and month of the year.
2. Go for a walk to look for signs of autumn in your community. Create a collection of leaves, looking for the smallest and biggest leaves you can find. Collect leaves of different shapes and colours. Find different sizes and shapes of pinecones. Take these treasures home and make a collage.
3. Find piles of leaves to jump in. Have your child help you rake the leaves in your yard. Have fun trying to throw and catch leaves.
4. To develop a sense of responsibility at home, encourage your child to hang up their jacket and put away their backpack when they get home from school.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of fall. Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ Every Autumn Comes the Bear by Jim Arnosky
- ✓ The Pumpkin Blanket by Deborah Turney-Zagwyn
- ✓ Time to Sleep by Denise Fleming
- ✓ Fall Leaves Fall by Zoe Hall
- ✓ Harvest by Kris Waldherr
- ✓ Moon Glowing by Elizabeth Partridge

Colours and Shapes

In Kindergarten, children learn basic colours and shapes. You can help your child become more aware of colours and shapes in the following way:

1. Ask questions that require your child to label the colour of an object (“Would you like your green sweater or your red sweater?”) or the shape of an object (“What shape is a wheel?”)
2. Go for a walk and look for shapes and colours in the neighborhood.
3. Have your child make different shapes with his or her body such as a ball or a star.
4. Make playdough at home. Add food colour to make different colours. Create different shapes with the playdough. Find different shaped objects at home that you can trace. Your child can colour the shapes with different coloured crayons.
5. Have your child help you sort clean laundry by matching socks by size (ie: small, medium and large) and colour.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of colour and shape. Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ Little Blue and Little Yellow by Leo Lionni
- ✓ Brown Bear, Brown Bear by Bill Martin Jr. (available in French)
- ✓ Red is Best by Kathy Stinson
- ✓ Is It Red? Is It Yellow? Is It Blue? by Tana Hoban
- ✓ Shapes, Shapes, Shapes and So Many Circles, So Many Squares by Tana Hoban

Playdough Recipe

Combine 2 cups of flour with 1 cup of salt, one package of Kool-aide and 2 tsp. cream of tartar.

Add 1 " tablespoons of cooking oil. Gradually add one cup of boiling water to the mixture.

It will be sticky because it is hot. Let it cool, knead and add more flour if needed.

Store the playdough in a plastic bag and save in the refrigerator. It will keep for several weeks.

Alphabet

In Kindergarten, children are learning the letters of the alphabet and are learning to become more aware of letter sounds. You can help your child become more aware of letters and sounds in the following ways:

1. Play a game where you call out a letter of the alphabet and your child tries to make that letter with his or her body.
2. Have your child draw a letter of the alphabet on your back then you guess which letter it is. Then it is your turn to draw a letter on your child's back and have him or her try to identify which letter it is.
3. Choose a simple word such as "cat", "bee" or "shoe". Have your child think of as many rhyming words as he or she can. Nonsense words are fine.
4. Have your child make a card to give to someone special. They can draw a picture and sign their name. Your child might also write other letters or words, such as the name of the person he or she is giving it to. As your child prints each letter, say the correct letter name.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of the alphabet. Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ Animalia by Graeme Base
- ✓ Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault
- ✓ Museum ABC by the Metropolitan Museum of Art
- ✓ Alphabet City by Stephen Johnson

Mathematics

In mathematics, Kindergarten children learn to count groups of objects from 1 to 10. They learn about patterns in their world. They also learn about measurement when using words such as, large/small, long/short and empty/full. You can help your child become more aware of mathematics in the following ways:

1. Have your child count the plates as you set the table.
2. Count out ten pennies then have your child pick them up and drop them into a cup or piggybank as he or she counts each one.
3. Bake cookies together and use words such as 'empty', 'full', 'more' or 'less' as you add the ingredients.
4. Count with your child to see how many times he or she can jump up and down or hop on one foot.
5. Play games with your child such as "Snakes and Ladders" or card games such as "Snap", "Memory" or "Go Fish".
6. Encourage your child to look for patterns on his or her clothes.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of mathematics. Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ Chicka Chicka 1, 2, 3 by Bill Martin Jr., Michael Sampson and Lois Ehlert
- ✓ Ten Black Dots by Donald Crews
- ✓ The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins (available in French and Spanish)
- ✓ Is It Larger? Is It Smaller? by Tana Hoban
- ✓ Anno's Counting Book by Mitsumasa Anno
- ✓ Ten Red Apples by Pat Hutchins
- ✓ Over in the Meadow by Olive Wadsworth

Winter

1. Winter provides many opportunities to talk with your child about the changes in nature. You can explore the fun aspects of winter in the following ways:
2. Go outside in the fresh snow. Encourage your child to make different kinds of footprints, to make snow angels or to build a snowman. Have your child help you shovel the sidewalk.
3. Have your child think of as many words as possible to describe the snow (ie: soft, crunchy, flakey)
4. Make paper snowflakes. Have your child fold a square piece of paper 2 or 3 times and cut shapes from each side of the folded square.
5. Encourage your child to dress him or herself in their winter clothing. Help your child learn to be responsible for these items by showing him or her where to put them away.
6. Take your child tobogganing. Have your child pull the toboggan up the hill.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of winter. Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats (available in Spanish)
- ✓ The Mitten by Jan Brett
- ✓ Owl Moon by Jane Yolen (available in French)
- ✓ Sadie and the Snowman by Allen Morgan (available in French)
- ✓ White Snow, Bright Snow by Alvin Tresselt
- ✓ Snowballs by Lois Elhart

Family and Friends

Kindergarten children are still learning to develop friendship skills. They are also continuing to learn to show a positive and caring attitude towards others. You can help your child develop his or her social skills in the following ways:

1. Make it possible for your child to invite a friend over to play and to share toys.
2. Encourage your child to help a friend or family member by holding the door open for them.
3. Have your child help cook a meal by washing carrots, tearing lettuce into small pieces or peeling a banana for fruit salad.

4. While working together in the kitchen, have your child label the names of the foods and the utensils being used. Talk about the steps taken as you prepare dinner.
5. Encourage your child to do something special for someone such as draw a picture and/or make a card.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of family and friends. Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ Koala Lou by Mem Fox
- ✓ Harriet You'll Drive Me Wild by Mem Fox
- ✓ Love You Forever by Robert Munsch (available in French and Spanish)
- ✓ Hug Me by Patti Stren
- ✓ Freckles and Willie by Margery Cuyler

Living Things

Many kindergarten children are fascinated with living things such as animals, insects and plants. You can help your child learn more about living things in the following ways:

1. When looking at pictures of animals or visiting the zoo, have your child name each animal. Talk about where they live and what they might eat. Talk about the unique names for many baby animals such as calf or chick.
2. Read your child a simple book like "The Very Hungry Caterpillar". After reading the story, help your child remember the sequence of the story. Ask your child what happened at the beginning of the story? What happened next? What happened at the end of the story?
3. Make animal puppets out of a paper bag or a sock.
4. Have your child move his or her body like different animals and make the sound of each animal.
5. Encourage your child to help take care of a family pet or a plant in your home.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of animals. Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ Man Gave Names to All the Animals by Bob Dylan and Jim Arnosky
- ✓ The Very Busy Spider or The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
- ✓ One Little Mouse by Dori Chaconas
- ✓ From Seeds to Plants by Gail Gibbons
- ✓ The Water Hole by Graeme Base
- ✓ Waiting for Wings by Lois Elhart
- ✓ Nuts to You by Lois Elhart

Spring

Spring is an exciting time in Calgary. The season offers opportunities to spend more time outside learning about the changes in nature. It also provides an opportunity to continue learning about living things. You can help your child learn more about spring in the following ways:

1. Take your child to the playground so he or she has an opportunity to run, climb and swing.
2. While at the playground, look for opportunities to coach your child around taking turns and sharing the equipment with others.
3. Take chalk outside and draw on the sidewalk and/or driveway.
4. Encourage your child to describe the changes that they can find outside in spring.
5. After reading a story to your child several times, encourage your child to retell the story as he or she looks at the pictures.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of spring. Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ Splish, Splash, Spring by Jan Carr
- ✓ It's Spring by Linda Glaser
- ✓ In the Tall, Tall Grass by Denise Fleming
- ✓ When Will it be Spring? By Catherine Walters

Preparing for Grade One

In June, your child may also be feeling a variety of emotions about leaving Kindergarten and starting Grade one. You can help your child to learn more about feelings in the following ways:

1. Have your child cut out pictures from magazines and newspapers that show a variety of emotions. Label and talk about the different feelings shown in the pictures. Make a collage.
2. Play a game of charades with your child. Have your child act out a particular feeling (ie: mad, tired, happy) and you guess what it is or, provide your child with a particular emotion and have them act it out.
3. Talk with your child and make a list of all the activities that he or she most enjoyed in kindergarten.
4. Talk to your child about school ending and how he or she feels about going to Grade one. Be positive about the change.

There are a number of books available at the public library, your school library and/or from bookstores on the topic of "Feelings". Some titles you and your child might enjoy are:

- ✓ I am Absolutely Too Small for School by Lauren Child
- ✓ First Grade Jitters by Robert Quackenbush and Yan Nascimbene
- ✓ How are you Peeling? by Saxton Freyman
- ✓ Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst
- ✓ No David! by David Shannon
- ✓ I Have Feelings by Jana N. Hunter
- ✓ Hunter's Best Friend at School by Laura Elliot